

From: Doug Knowles
To: Microsoft ATR
Date: 11/19/01 8:53pm
Subject: Microsoft settlement is woefully inadequate

To Whom It May Concern:

I have been a software engineer for over 25 years, and I am writing to protest the inadequate sanctions imposed on Microsoft under the proposed antitrust settlement. The settlement will allow Microsoft to continue its most predatory practices and rob consumers of the opportunity to experience, evaluate, and possibly choose among potentially competitive technologies.

The great failure in the DOJ's case against Microsoft is that it concentrated on harm inflicted on competitors that are still in existence today; what has been forgotten is the longer list of technologies and competitors that Microsoft stifled and killed before consumers ever had a chance to know they existed, let alone choose as an alternative to the narrow choices offered by Microsoft.

As an employee of various firms that partnered and/or competed with Microsoft, I have seen Microsoft exercise the clout it holds as a near monopoly in at least three different ways that I believe to be in violation of the spirit (if not the letter) of antitrust law, and certainly to the detriment of the software industry in general as well as its customers:

- Misdirection given to independent software vendors (ISVs) by Microsoft operating system managers to steer them away from a competitive position vis a vis Microsoft applications;
- Threats made against ISVs to withhold technology cooperation on established product lines to prevent those ISVs from pursuing independent product development efforts not to Microsoft's liking;
- Exploitation of smaller competitors (through a combination of partnerships and threats) to make them temporary agents of Microsoft's agenda to their ultimate detriment.

If the DOJ can not back away from this settlement, I hope that the states that have rejected the settlement have more success in re-establishing diversity and competition in the software industry.

Sincerely,
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